

Capita PLC

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

12–15 September 2017

Overall effectiveness		Good	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding	Traineeships	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good	

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have successfully introduced a range of new apprenticeship standards – for example, in financial services, customer services and operational delivery.
- Leaders and managers have developed effective partnerships with very large corporate clients in the financial and public services. As a result, apprentices have access to high-quality work placements and almost all remain in employment after completing their programmes.
- Staff are well qualified and have extensive industry experience. They use this well to teach effective sessions that inspire learners and link learning to industry standards.
- The majority of apprentices in accounting and finance, administration and business management achieve their qualifications within the planned time frame.
- Apprentices benefit from high-quality and effective on- and off-the-job training. They make good progress and develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to meet the demands of their employment.
- Adult learners overcome barriers to gaining employment, achieve qualifications and grow in confidence.
- Learners' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. They have high aspirations and very positive attitudes towards their work and learning.
- Traineeship programmes require improvement. Too few learners who start on a traineeship programme progress to an apprenticeship, employment or further learning.
- Staff do not consistently develop learners' skills in English and mathematics. Too often, learners' written work is not corrected and learners do not have appropriate opportunities to improve the mathematics skills required for their job roles.
- Achievement rates for the very small number of apprentices on IT, software, web and telecoms programme require improvement.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Capita PLC is a large company employing over 75,000 members of staff. It supports employers to make their processes smarter, organisations more efficient and customer experiences better. Knowledgepool is the company within Capita PLC responsible for delivering training internally to new and existing staff, and externally to the public sector and a small group of large blue-chip employers in financial services.
- Capita PLC delivers apprenticeship programmes, traineeships and pre-employment programmes for adults nationwide. The very large majority of Capita PLC learners are apprentices based in the North of England, West Midlands and London. Traineeship and adult programmes make up around 8% of the overall delivery.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of trainees who go on to an apprenticeship, employment or further education by:
 - reviewing the traineeship delivery model to increase the job or apprenticeship opportunities available for all trainees
 - ensuring that staff increase the number of employers they work with who can offer work placements, apprenticeships and job opportunities.
- Improve the development of learners' English and mathematics skills by:
 - ensuring that trainers and assessors (referred to as 'talent coaches') use their knowledge of learners' starting points to set appropriate targets for the improvement and development of these skills
 - planning and teaching relevant topics, that learners are not yet confident with, to enable learners to develop the mathematics skills required within their job roles
 - ensuring that staff regularly check and correct learners' written work to identify errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and inform learners how to make improvements.
- Improve the achievement rate for apprentices on IT, software, web and telecoms programmes by:
 - ensuring that apprentices have the opportunities at work to meet all the requirements of the qualifications.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and managers have a clear and well-thought-out vision, with quality improvement as a key focus. As a result, the large majority of learners at Capita benefit from good-quality teaching, learning and assessment and achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders have developed very good partnerships with clients and have been very effective in the development and introduction of high-quality new apprenticeship standards. For example, leaders at one of the largest banks in the UK speak very highly of the way staff at Capita developed and introduced new apprenticeship standards to meet their business needs, and to match the job roles required within the financial sector.
- Leaders and managers review effectively the quality of the apprenticeship, adult learning and traineeship programmes. They carry out rigorous performance and quality reviews both on their own programmes and those of their subcontractor. Managers have had a good focus on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, and their actions have improved the quality of provision further.
- The recently revised observation of teaching, learning and assessment process has a good focus on the strengths and areas for improvement in sessions. Observers collate much information during observations. However, they do not use this information effectively to agree detailed action plans with talent coaches to identify their future development needs and to focus on apprentices' and learners' progress sufficiently.
- Staff at Capita are very well qualified, carefully selected and have extensive industry experience which benefits apprentices and learners well. Talent coaches, team leaders and programme managers have good access to training and continuing professional development. Leaders invest heavily in staff and allow them the time to attend training and gain further qualifications to aid them in their job roles.
- Leaders, managers and talent coaches make effective use of data to provide them with a good oversight of learners' progress. Leaders and managers share information well with employers to ensure that apprentices make the progress expected of them. The highly effective and open communication channels at Capita encourage all staff to check and ensure that the majority of learners make the progress expected of them, complete their programmes and progress to a positive outcome.
- Senior leaders and managers know their provision well. However, while their evaluation of the provision includes all staff, partners and employers, it is too descriptive and does not make clear judgements on its quality and the impact it has on learners. As a result, managers have not accurately assessed the performance of traineeships.
- The recently revised English and mathematics policy and plan, to ensure that talent coaches and trainers assist their learners to improve their skills, is not effective enough. Staff receive support and training but do not fully and effectively develop learners' English and mathematics skills.

The governance of the provider

- The senior leadership team and board provide a clear strategic direction and strong challenge on the performance of the apprenticeship, traineeship and adult learning programmes. Senior leaders have a good focus on quality in line with the expectations of the high-profile clients and organisations they work with.
- The senior leadership team and board regularly and effectively hold managers, team leaders and talent coaches to account for their performance, particularly around the quality of the provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and managers have ensured that effective policies, procedures and checks are in place which cover all aspects of safe practice concerning learners. Designated officers and the safeguarding lead deal promptly and effectively with any safeguarding referrals. The designated officers across the different regions of the country have established good relationships with external agencies, including local authorities, to ensure that concerns are worked through to resolution.
- All staff have completed 'Prevent' duty training and are aware of the need to implement actions in order to identify and protect learners from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Managers regularly provide updated information and training to ensure that awareness continues.
- Learners feel safe at work and while attending their training sessions. Learners know about, and adhere well to, the health and safety requirements in the workplace. Relationships with employers are strong, and staff liaise effectively with them to ensure that apprentices are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in the learners' high achievement rates and their positive participation in learning activities. Capita has been a significant partner in the development of the new apprenticeship standards and staff have used their experience well to ensure that the quality of provision for these apprentices is good.
- Trainers and talent coaches plan well and teach effective sessions for the majority of learners. Learners enjoy their studies and most make good progress, including in the development of behaviours as required in the new apprenticeship standards.
- Trainers and talent coaches have extensive previous work experience, enabling them to understand their learners' needs and allowing them to draw on their own experiences and expertise to enrich teaching, learning and assessment. For example, trainers on adult programmes provide lively and interesting sessions that rekindle their learners' enthusiasm for learning and develop the skills they need for work.
- Learners benefit from good-quality learning environments and resources, such as in prestigious banks at Canary Wharf in London. Trainers, talent coaches and learners make

good use of digital 'learning platforms' and interactive technology to make sessions and learning interesting and productive.

- Trainers, talent coaches and learning support officers work well together to support learners and to ensure they progress well. They make good use of Capita's comprehensive online learners' progress and achievement records to ensure that learners at risk of falling behind quickly receive effective additional support.
- Trainers and talent coaches pay good attention to meeting learners' individual needs. They use outcomes from assessments of learners' prior vocational knowledge and skills well to plan effective programmes that match learners' needs, experiences and ambitions. Where appropriate, many apprentices work on additional and individual tasks which they skilfully complete.
- Staff involve employers very effectively in planning learners' training and development. For apprenticeships, employers' staff work closely with talent coaches to ensure that training links well to apprentices' and employers' needs. On traineeships and adult programmes, employers are involved well in supporting learners to gain work placements.
- Trainers and talent coaches use a good range of assessment methods to support learners to achieve their qualifications and make good progress. Apprentices benefit from good-quality on- and off-the-job assessment and detailed progress reviews. The tracking of their progress is good. Staff set clear targets for apprentices on the new standards. As a result, the majority of learners know what they need to do to improve and what progress they have made.
- Trainers and talent coaches ensure that learners have good opportunities to understand equality and diversity in sessions. They use the excellent resources available online to deepen and support learners' knowledge of these topics. For example, learners working at airports understand well how to adjust their practice when dealing with customers from different religious backgrounds.
- Learners develop their verbal communication and presentation skills well. However, staff do not regularly correct errors in learners' written work or support learners sufficiently to make improvements. As a result, learners repeatedly make too many spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes in their work.
- Trainers and talent coaches do not consistently develop learners' mathematics skills. Staff do not use the results from the assessment of learners' starting points well to plan activities effectively or to set appropriate targets. As a result, a minority of learners do not develop the appropriate skills required in relation to their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Learners receive outstanding support from staff. As a result, they are highly confident, self-assured and very well presented. They develop extremely positive behaviours early on in their programme, such as high attendance rates and punctuality, which prepare them very well for employment.
- Learners take part in sessions very enthusiastically and really enjoy their learning. Trainees and adult learners work exceptionally well in class and cooperate very well with each other and their trainers. As a result, they improve their confidence levels significantly and value the experience of working with others. Learners have excellent levels of self-

motivation and work very well independently.

- Learners are very positive about their learning and highly committed to completing their programmes successfully and on time. Apprentices value their job roles and take pride in their work. Apprentices on the new standards clearly identify how they have developed the relevant behaviours. For example, customer service apprentices share personal learning about healthy lifestyles with others through presentations, a required behaviour under teamwork in the new standard.
- Apprentices work in high-quality work placements with large employers. They are very well matched to their work roles, effectively apply theory to their work practices and become valuable team members. Apprentices make an excellent contribution to their employers and are often given additional responsibilities to their job role.
- Apprentices benefit from gaining additional qualifications and skills outside their framework or standard. For example, through employer-led workshops, business administration apprentices gain health and safety at work and fire safety certificates. Other apprentices gain leadership skills and receive training to use complex business software.
- Trainees and adult learners on pre-employment programmes take part in very purposeful, relevant and well-planned work experience. Through a broad range of activities, they develop essential work-related skills to support and prepare them for employment. For example, learners wanting to work in the hotel industry work in a variety of roles with a well-known hotel chain and develop excellent customer service skills.
- The vast majority of learners receive consistently good information, advice and guidance, reinforced by talent coaches, throughout their programme. Learners follow programmes that are closely matched to their career choices and interests. They remain highly motivated and are well prepared for their next stage of education and employment.
- Learners confidently and regularly discuss topics related to British values, the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and online safety. Well-informed talent coaches support apprentices to extend their understanding about these topics during progress reviews. For example, advanced apprentices explore and debate the effects of 'Brexit' from the views of both the general public and civil servants.
- Learners feel very safe, and know whom to contact if they have concerns. Apprentices have excellent knowledge of health and safety practices. They know how to keep themselves safe and how to deal with incidents in the workplace. For example, operational delivery advanced apprentices, working at airports, complete on-the-job training in the use of batons, handcuffs and restraints.
- Apprentices take part in a wide range of activities outside their work and lessons, which broaden their experiences and engage them well with the local community. For example, they do charitable fundraising, support interview workshops for young people and take part in sector-based projects.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The overall achievement rate for the vast majority of apprentices is high. The proportion of apprentices completing their programme in the planned time frame has improved in 2016/17 and is also high. Achievement rates for apprentices completing programmes in

accounting, administration and business management are particularly high.

- Current apprentices completing frameworks, and those on the new standards, make good progress in developing the skills required to do their jobs and towards the completion of their qualifications. As a result, apprentices are often given additional responsibilities and tasks at work, and almost all remain in, or move into, sustained employment at the end of their programme.
- The proportion of apprentices completing higher-level programmes in business who gain distinctions and merits is high. These apprentices make very good progress from their starting points and develop the skills required to perform at management level.
- The majority of apprentices who are required to achieve functional skills qualifications in mathematics, English, and information and communication technology (ICT) do so at their first attempt.
- Adult learners make very good progress in developing their vocational and work-related skills. The vast majority achieve qualifications in customer services and personal and social skills. Many who have been away from the world of work for a sustained period gain jobs in retail and hospitality.
- Managers monitor effectively the achievement rates of different groups of learners. There are no significant achievement gaps between learners by gender, ethnicity, disability or age.
- Apprentices, trainees and adult learners produce work of a high standard. For example, business administration apprentices successfully use technology to produce high-quality marketing materials for external company use.
- Achievement rates for the very small proportion of apprentices in IT, software, web and telecommunications are low in comparison to the other programmes and require improvement.
- Too few trainees progress into sustained employment, further education or an apprenticeship. Trainees' achievement of qualifications is good but the number progressing to a positive destination is too low and has remained low over a three-year period.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Currently, there are 86 learners on adult programmes, which is approximately 4% of all learners. Adult learners complete short pre-employment programmes to support them to gain work-related skills and qualifications to help them into work.
- Leaders and managers plan adult programmes effectively. They use public funding appropriately to re-engage disadvantaged adults, many of whom have been unemployed for some time. Staff design programmes with a clear purpose and with local employers who have job vacancies available, in particular in hospitality and retail.
- Managers have developed good partnerships with Jobcentre Plus offices to meet the needs of the unemployed in the area well. As a result, recruitment of learners is thorough

and staff match learners well to their chosen careers.

- Staff support learners very well to overcome the barriers which have previously prevented them from gaining employment. For example, trainers facilitate group work and tasks that enable learners to work together and learn from each other. As a result, learners improve their attitude, confidence, self-esteem and self-belief.
- Learners improve their verbal communication and listening skills effectively. They contribute well to group discussions and debates, and understand how to voice their opinions and feelings appropriately. They become good team players.
- For a minority of adult learners, trainers pay too little attention to their starting points, particularly in the development of mathematics skills. As a result, learners do not have specific detail in their targets to support them to develop and practise their skills and understand how they can use them in the workplace.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Capita currently has 1,900 apprentices in learning, of whom 550 are on the new standards. The majority of apprentices study towards qualifications in financial services, customer services, business administration and ICT. An even split exists between intermediate and advanced apprenticeships and a growing number, around 320, are on higher-level apprenticeships.
- Staff and apprentices have very high expectations. A high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications and almost all remain in employment at the end of their programme. The majority of current apprentices are on track to achieve within their planned timescales. Staff work very well with the small cohort of apprentices who were behind and were transferred from another provider. These apprentices are now making very good progress.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that programmes meet the requirements of both framework and standards apprenticeships. They use their strong links with employers and partners very well to ensure that programmes are designed and implemented to meet the needs of industry and apprentices.
- Staff use their detailed industry knowledge and experience very effectively. They use this well to link on- and off-the-job training to enable apprentices to develop good technical skills and a deep understanding of professional standards. For example, apprentices learn well from staff who have extensive experience in nationwide and international banking. As a result, apprentices develop up-to-date and highly relevant skills in financial services, and a very good knowledge of current industry practice.
- Apprentices develop well the appropriate skills and behaviours required in the workplace. As a result of their studies, apprentices have gained promotion and extra responsibilities at work. Apprentices on the new standards develop behaviours that they use well in their workplace. For example, apprentices in call centres develop well the techniques needed to deal with challenging customers.
- Talent coaches provide very good support and guidance. They carefully identify apprentices' individual needs at the start of their programme to ensure that they study at the correct level, and plan any additional support effectively. Staff set apprentices on the new standards challenging targets, based on their starting points, to achieve merits and

distinctions. Employers and apprentices value highly this support and, as a result, few apprentices leave the programme early.

- Talent coaches ensure that employers are closely involved in the delivery of apprenticeship programmes. Employers value the frequency of visits and regular reviews to monitor apprentices' progress. They work closely with talent coaches to coordinate on- and off-the-job training. Employers supporting apprentices on the new standards have a good understanding of their obligations in allowing time off for training. However, a small minority of employers are not yet meeting these expectations.
- Most apprentices have prior qualifications that exempt them from further study of formal English and mathematics. Staff work with apprentices to identify how they use these skills at work. However, the further development of these skills is not consistent across all subject areas.

Traineeships

Requires improvement

- Currently, there are 90 learners on traineeships at Capita. This is approximately 4% of all the delivery. Capita delivers traineeships with two large employers in the financial and public sector. Staff design programmes to develop trainees' work-related mathematics and English skills and for them to take part in work experience.
- Too few trainees progress to employment, apprenticeships or further education. Although trainees who complete the high-quality work experience element of the programme progress well, those who are unsuccessful or leave the programme early do not move into a positive outcome. This has been the case for the previous three years and requires improvement.
- Trainers do not identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in trainees' written work and give appropriate feedback on how they can improve. As a result, trainees are not supported to develop their writing skills to meet employers' expectations.
- Trainers plan and teach lively and interesting sessions. They use a good range of interactive activities which trainees enjoy and take part in enthusiastically. As a result, trainees achieve their qualifications in customer services and personal and social skills.
- Trainees develop good personal, social and work-related skills that prepare them well for progression into work, an apprenticeship or further training. In particular, trainers ensure that learners understand and use the behaviours expected by potential employers, including good timekeeping, teamwork and showing respect for others.
- Assessment of learning is good. Trainers use a range of assessment methods effectively, including directed questioning, observation of practice and peer assessment, to check understanding and assess the progress of trainees. Trainees receive feedback that is constructive and encouraging, reinforcing key aspects of learning and the development of their confidence.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58177
Type of provider	Independent learning providers
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	6,000
Principal/CEO	David Marsh
Telephone number	07817 391919
Website	www.knowledgepool.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	28	148	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	102	666	116	691	81	250		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	28		62		90			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	n/a							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	n/a							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	FWD Training and Consultancy							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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